

# **Connecticut Association of Nurse Anesthetists**

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Written Testimony of  
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House Bill No. 5221, An Act Concerning Changes to Program Approval for  
Colleges and Universities

Thursday, March 8, 2012

General Assembly's Joint Committee on Higher Education and Employment  
Advancement

Good Day Senator Bye, Representative Willis, Senator Boucher, Representative LeGeyt and the distinguished members of the Higher Education & Employment Advancement Committee. My name is Dianne Murphy and I live in Waterbury. I am a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA), a licensed Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN), and I hold a Master's Degree in Biological Sciences specializing in anesthesia. I am here today representing the Connecticut Association of Nurse Anesthetists (CANA). Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 5221, "An Act Concerning Changes to Program Approval for Colleges and Universities".

On behalf of CANA, I would like to state our concerns regarding the passage of the bill as it is currently written. This legislation seeks to eliminate the requirement that independent colleges or universities must receive approval of the State Board of Education for new or revised academic programs. CANA is deeply concerned that independent colleges or universities will be permitted to develop any kind of program including health care without regard for regulations designed to protect public health and safety. We think that this bill is a vehicle that a university may use to establish a substandard health care related program.

Specifically, Quinnipiac University has been seeking to start an anesthesia assistant program. For the past two years the Departments of Public Health and Higher Education have raised concerns and questions about this program that have yet to be addressed by the University. The application remains incomplete. However, if this legislation were to become law Quinnipiac University could simply bypass the review process and open the program. CANA believes that this does not serve the best interest of the public health and safety.

CANA has several concerns with Quinnipiac's program. First, under current statute anesthesia assistants do not exist; meaning there is no scope of practice to offer guidelines to protect the public. CANA's second serious concern for the public's safety is that candidates who have absolutely no health care education, training or experience will be allowed to enter an advanced health care degree program. Last, the concerns raised by both the Departments of Public Health and Higher Education have yet to be addressed by Quinnipiac University.

If the Higher Education & Employment Advancement Committee decided to move forward with this legislation, the Connecticut Association of Nurse Anesthetists would respectfully request an amendment to HB 5221. This amendment would need to exclude health care related programs. CANA believes the current regulatory processes and review by OFAA exist for the purpose of protecting the public. We are concerned that left unexamined, schools will establish substandard health care academic programs that may not be in the best interest of the citizens of Connecticut.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to address you regarding our concerns with this this legislation.

I would be glad to answer any question at this time.